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ACHIEVERS JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH*Open Access Publications of Achievers University, Owo*Available Online at www.achieverssciencejournal.org**Economics Pre-Service Teachers' Knowledge and Practices of Reflective Teaching as Predictors of Teaching Skills in Ibadan****T.V. Gbadamosi, PhD**

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated pre-service Economics teachers' knowledge, perception, and practices of reflective teaching as predictors of teaching skills. The study adopted an ex-post facto design. All Economics pre-service teachers in the University of Ibadan, Ibadan Oyo State, Nigeria were the population. Purposive sampling was used to select departments offering Economics as their teaching subject. In all, a total of Forty-five (45) pre-service teachers participated in the study. Four validated research instruments: Knowledge of Reflective Teaching Test (KRTT) ($K-R20=0.87$), Pre-service Teacher's Use of Reflective Practice Questionnaire-PTURPQ ($\alpha=0.79$), and Teacher's Classroom Practice Observational Rating Scale (TCPORS) ($T=0.770$); and Instructional guide for observers (IGO) were used to collect data for this study. The data collected were analysed using Multiple Regression Analysis. Findings of the study revealed that majority of the pre-service Economics teachers had moderate knowledge of reflective teaching, few had low knowledge of reflective teaching and very few had high knowledge of reflective teaching. Also, pre-service teachers' teaching skills were not significantly affected by knowledge of reflective teaching. The result also revealed that many of the pre-service teachers used reflective teaching occasionally. There was high positive correlation between pre-service teachers' practice of reflective teaching and teaching skills. Therefore, it is recommended that Pre-service teachers should ensure that their knowledge of reflective teaching is updated and ensures continuous positive perception and use of reflective teaching for improved teaching skills.

KEYWORDS: Teacher education, professional development, University education**1. Introduction**

Knowledge of Economics is important for the survival of an individual and society at large. Economics provides an individual with the tools of economic analysis that will enable him or her to understand current issues and problems confronting the society by providing critical thinking techniques. It enables an individual to contribute his or her fair share to society's well-being. Economics teaches people to take a practical approach to world issues, to be

objective, and find solutions to daily problems by living peacefully and happily with others, as well as recognize the dignity of labour. Therefore, effective teaching and learning of Economics are important for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Particularly, goal 1-eradication of poverty and goal 4- quality education by the year 2030.

Specifically, the Global community's commitment to Education 2030 Agenda is aimed at achieving one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through

provision of quality education. To provide quality education, teachers continue to be the most valuable assets of any educational system for inclusive growth. Teachers are at the forefront of transmitting knowledge, skills and values. Teachers play a crucial role in restructuring and strengthening the educational system of any country. It is, therefore, frequently stated that the standard of education is determined by the quality of teachers and their instructions (Shavit, and Moshe, 2019). Hence, the need for effective teacher education because, when teachers keep improving their knowledge and skills in the application of new and emerging teaching strategies, the learning task will become relatively simple, less stressful, and more result-oriented (Gbadamosi, 2019).

The teacher education programme shall be structured to equip teachers for effective performance of their duties (FRN, 2013). And since all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained as stated in the policy documents, pre-service teachers must be introduced to the various components of teacher education curriculum namely: General Studies; General Education such as Philosophy of Education, Educational Psychology, Sociology of Education, History of Education, Curriculum Studies, Principles and Practice of Education, Educational Technology, among others. It also includes studies in students' areas of specialization; and teaching practice. It is worthy of note that of all these components of the teacher education curriculum, it is the teaching practice that exposes the intern teachers to the realities of the classroom setting before certification. It also allows novice pre-service teachers to experience the actual teaching setting. Teaching practice gives student-teachers an avenue to translate theory into practice and provides opportunities for appropriate mentoring in the specific subject area and teaching as a profession (Tlali, 2018).

However, reports have shown that pre-service teachers present facts in an illogical or coherent manner thereby inhibiting the transfer of learning. They caused confusion instead of association that facilitates learning and enhances retention (Sangoleye and Popoola, 2016; Gbadamosi and Salaudeen, 2017). In another vein, student-teacher demonstrated

inadequate mastery of the subject matter/content, poor pedagogical-content knowledge, lack of proficiency in selection and utilisation of instructional materials, and poor communication skill (External moderator reports of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan 2017, 2018 and 2019). In addition, scholars reported that teachers lack basic teaching skills while pre-service teachers are not left out of this challenge. Moreover, pre-service teachers cannot use special tools to teach as characterised by inadequate teaching skills (Sequeira, 2017). To cap it all, poor teaching methods adopted and non-usage of instructional materials proliferation in classrooms (Sequeira, 2017).

Scholars have defined teaching skills differently. Ahmodu, Shuaibu, and Musa (2015) defined teaching skills, as those activities directed toward learning that is notably helpful in implementing desired changes in learners' behaviour. Khanam (2015) defined teaching skills as distinct and cohesive activities carried out by teachers to promote pupils' learning. Among the skills are communication style, use of instructional materials, teacher questioning, and time management. Researchers have linked poor teaching skills to a variety of factors, including motivation and financial benefits, administrative and leadership styles, monitoring and supervision and lack of reflective teaching practice (Foong *et al.* 2018; Oke, *et al.*, 2019).

However, it is expected that the cooperating subject teacher sits in the classroom when the student-teacher teaches to maintain classroom discipline and appropriately mentor the intern teacher, what is practised in some situations is that subject teachers see intern teachers as relief teachers (Sangoleye and Popoola, 2016). Therefore, most times the student teachers on teaching practice are left to fate, with little or no guidance except when supervisors visit them for assessment which is occasionally. Despite all the challenges facing intern teachers in the course of teaching practice exercise, a student-teacher needs to be proficient in teaching skills such as lesson planning and presentation; classroom management, and discipline among others. To this end, there has been a growing concern about the improvement of teacher trainees in our universities. This concern has brought about several reforms in teacher education. These

reforms are to boost pre-service teachers' pedagogical skills, the use of relevant and effective instructional strategies, and the integration of technology into education (Oke, Durowoju and Ige, 2019; Shavit and Moshe, 2019; Gbadamosi, 2019; Yusuf, Afolabi, and Oyetayo, 2014).

Moreover, studies have supported the view that pre-service teachers should become reflective practitioners to develop their pedagogical reasons, teaching skills and improve students' achievement (Gbadamosi, 2021), which is the heart of these discourses. In its broadest definition, reflective teaching comprises thinking about one's teaching. In addition, Bailey *et al.* (2004) defined reflective teaching as teachers meditating on what happened in the classroom and considering alternative ways to achieve goals. Reflective teaching is a way of teaching based on the belief that teachers can make a difference in their students' lives.

According to Shavit and Moshe (2019), reflective teaching involves teachers and student-teachers gathering information on teaching, assessing their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and utilising the knowledge as a platform towards self-examination. Also, it is a tool for teachers to consider, examine, and accurately evaluate their classroom actions, according to this definition. It is critical to investigate teaching skills in light of their role in increasing effectiveness of teachers, which has far-reaching implications for the performance of learners and their overall academic standard. The predictors of pre-service teachers' teaching skills are taken into account in this study.

Knowledge of reflective teaching is an important variable in this study. Knowledge is defined as factual information on or about a person, thing, or event. Knowledge of reflective teaching and teaching skills of pre-service teachers is critical in learning and learning to teach. Smylie *et al.* (1999) divided pre-service teachers' knowledge and skill acquisition into three main categories: a thorough understanding of the subject matter, as well as the historical, philosophical, and social-cultural foundations of education, as well as formal theories and empirical studies on teaching, learning, schools as organisations and transformation.

It is a collaborative process of learning with numerous opportunities for correction and improvement (Foong *et al.* 2018). Tlali (2018) examined pre-service teachers' understanding of reflective practice since knowledge is not seen as fixed and existing independently outside of the learner. Therefore, it is necessary to examine students' knowledge of reflective practice for self-development.

The practice of reflective skills is crucial for pre-service teachers during teaching practice. Tlali (2018) emphasised that all pre-service and in-service teachers should reflect on their perceptions, beliefs, experiences, and practices. Also, according to Lieberman and Miller (2000), reflective teaching, reflective inquiry, and reflection-on-practice lead to the accumulation of personal and professional knowledge. Khanam (2015) investigates how reflective teaching can help pre-service teachers develop good teaching skills. Teacher educators can assist student teachers to reflect on and enhance their practices by using personal histories, dialogue journals, and small and large-group discussions about their experiences.

However, pre-service teachers were observed and found to be performing below the standard of training provided to them while taking methodological courses in ivory towers. This concerning situation has been attributed to a variety of factors, including personal and professional ones. Hence, there is, therefore, the need to investigate pre-service teachers' knowledge and practices of reflective teaching as they play important roles in improving pre-service teachers teaching skills. Also, there is a paucity of literature on pre-service teachers' knowledge, and practices of reflective teaching as predictors of teaching skills. As a result, this study, therefore, examined Economics pre-service teachers' knowledge, and practices of reflective teaching as predictors of teaching skills. The study is anchored to John Dewey's (1933) theory of reflective thinking, which states that reflective thought is defined as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the even more conclusion of the study to which it tends" (Dewey 1933: 118).

2. Research Questions

1. What is Economics pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching?
2. What is Economics pre-service teachers' use of reflective teaching?
3. Is there any relationship between pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching and their teaching skills?
4. Is there any relationship between pre-service teachers' practice of reflective teaching and their teaching skills?

3. Materials and Methods

This study adopted the *ex-post facto* design of the correlational research type to find out the relationships that exist between the variables. The population of the study comprised all Economics pre-service teachers in the University of Ibadan, Ibadan Oyo State, Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select departments offering Economics as their teaching subject. The criterion for selecting these departments was that they were taught reflective teaching as one of the topics taken in ASE 224 and ASE 324-Economics Methods I and II respectively. The departments selected are; Arts and Social Science Education, Adult Education, Educational Management, and Special Education. Purposive sampling was used to select all 400 level students studying Education Economics or Economics as a minor in the 2018/2019 session. A total of Forty-five (45) pre-service teachers participated in the study.

Four validated research instruments were used to collect data in this study. Teacher's Knowledge of Reflective Teaching Test (KRTT) was developed by the researcher in order to assess the pre-service teacher knowledge of reflective teaching. It consists of 20 items of options A to D. The participants were asked to pick the correct answer. The content validity was done using opinions of two experts. The reliability of the scale was analysed using Kuder-Richardson K-R₂₀ for internal consistency and the result yielded 0.87.

Pre-service Teacher's Use of Reflective Practice Questionnaire (PTURPQ) is a self-reporting instrument constructed by the researcher to elicit information on pre-service teachers' use of reflective

teaching. It consists of 20 items on a five point Likert-Scale of very often-5, often -4, occasionally -3, rarely -2 and never -1. The content validity was done using opinions of two experts. Its reliability was established using Cronbach coefficient alpha ($\alpha=0.79$).

Classroom Practice Observational Rating Scale (TCPORS) was adopted from the University of Ibadan, Ibadan Teaching Observation Scale. It consists of 20 items of Four-point Likert-Scale of excellent-4, good-3, fair-2 and poor-1 to measure pre-service teachers teaching skills on lesson preparation, communication, use of instructional materials, teacher questioning, time management and personality. The content validity was re-affirmed using opinions of two experts. The reliability of the scale was also determined using inter-rater methods. The calculated reliability coefficient is 0.770 Scott's pie method.

Instructional Guide for Observers (IGO) is a manual developed to guide raters on the use of teacher's classroom practice observational. The content validity was done using opinions of two experts.

The researcher collected an introduction letter from the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education. The researcher explained the procedure of the research to the pre-service teachers before the instruments were administered to them.

The pre-service teachers were observed by a team of two observers each time twice while teaching and graded using Teacher's Classroom Practice Observational Scale. Thereafter, pre-service teachers filled the Knowledge of Reflective Teaching Test and Pre-service Teacher's Use of Reflective Practice Questionnaire on the spot. The data collection lasted four weeks.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Multiple Regression Analysis.

4. Results

Research Question 1: What is the Economics pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching?

Table 1: Economics Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Reflective Teaching

Knowledge of Reflective Teaching	Frequency	Percentage
Low	4	8.9
Moderate	39	86.7
High	2	4.4
Total	45	100

Table 1 shows that 39 (86.7%) of the pre-service teachers have moderate knowledge of reflective teaching, 4 (8.9%) have low knowledge of reflective teaching and 2 (4.4%) have high knowledge of reflective teaching.

Research Question 2: Is there any relationship between pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching and their teaching skills?

Table 2: Relationship between Pre-service Teachers' Knowledge of Reflective Teaching and Teaching Skills

Variables	N	X	SD	R	p-value	Remark
Knowledge of RT	45	1.96	0.36	-0.136	0.373	NS
Teaching Skills	45	75.64	8.07			

Table 2 reveals that there is a low negative correlation between pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching and their teaching skills ($r = -0.136$; $P = 0.373$) but not statistically significant. This indicates that pre-service teachers' teaching

skills is not significantly affected by knowledge of reflective teaching.

Research Question 3: What is the pre-service Economics teachers' use of reflective teaching?

Table 3: Economics Pre-service Teachers' Use of Reflective Teaching

Knowledge of Reflective Teaching	Frequency	Percentage
Never	0	0
Rarely	13	28.9
Occasionally	19	42.2
Often	12	26.7
Very often	1	2.2
Total	45	100

Table 3 presents extent to which pre-service Economics teachers use reflective teaching. The table indicated that 19 (42.2%) of the pre-service teachers use reflective teaching occasionally, 13 (28.9%) rarely use reflective teaching and 12 (26.7%) use reflective teaching often. However, only

one pre-service teacher uses reflective teaching very often and none indicated 'never' as his/her use of reflective teaching.

Research Question 4: Is there any relationship between pre-service teachers' practice of reflective teaching and their teaching skills?

Table 4: Relationship between Practice of Reflective Teaching and Teaching Skills

Variables	N	X	SD	R	p-value	Remark
Practice of RT	45	36.36	9.89	0.417	0.004**	Sig
Teaching Skills	45	75.64	8.07			

Table 4 shows the relationship between the pre-service teachers' practice of reflective teaching and their teaching skills. The table reveals that there is a high positive correlation between pre-service teachers' practice of reflective teaching and their

teaching skills ($r = 0.417$; $P = 0.004$) and it is statistically significant at 0.01 alpha level. This indicates that pre-service teachers' teaching skills is significantly related to practice of reflective teaching

5. Discussion

The findings concerning pre-service Economics teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching revealed that a high proportion of the pre-service teachers had moderate knowledge of reflective teaching, few had low knowledge of reflective teaching and very few have high knowledge of reflective teaching. According to Tlali (2018), the experiences gained during internships help these pre-service teachers become "quite fully cognizant of themselves and their environment in a way that changes their preconceptions of what might be possible." It is therefore advisable for pre-service economics teachers to have a good knowledge of reflective practice, which is crucial to their professional development.

The result of the relationship between the pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching and their teaching skills revealed that there was a low negative correlation between pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching and their teaching skills but not statistically significant, which indicates that pre-service teachers' teaching skills were not significantly affected by knowledge of reflective teaching. This result supports that of Oke, Durowoju and Ige (2018), that teachers who may not be skilled in reflective thinking will automatically respond to such academic and social issues without attempting to discover any more suitable opportunities or links to other issues. Also, knowledge of reflective teaching is highly important to the teacher, as well as student, success, "repeated exposure to reflection alone fails to help students [of education] engage in higher levels of critical reflection" (Thorpe, 2004). The result is also supported by Tlali (2018) that the pre-service should be equipped with reflective skills during their teacher education and that this should form part of their continuous professional development

The finding on the level of pre-service Economics teachers' use of reflective teaching indicated that many of the pre-service teachers used reflective teaching occasionally, few rarely used reflective teaching and very few use reflective teaching often. However, only one pre-service teacher used reflective teaching very often and none indicated

'never' as his/her use of reflective teaching. This finding is in agreement with Eryaman (2007) and Gbadamosi (2021) who established that the primary objective of teacher training programmes should be to encourage pre-service teachers to reason and make reflections to determine the negative or positive effects on students when some learning approaches are used and why several teaching method, technique, and materials are used. As a result, pre-service teachers should engage in reflective activities not only to gain new knowledge but also to act professionally approaches after graduating from college.

The study also revealed that there was high positive correlation between pre-service teachers' practice of reflective teaching and their teaching skills and significant. This indicates that pre-service teachers' teaching skills are significantly related to the practice of reflective teaching. This finding agrees well with that of Shavit and Moshe (2019) who on the investigation of reflective teaching practice effect on training development skills of the pre-service teachers in Bayburt University Faculty of Education Department of Elementary Science Education. They reported that the discourse, encounter of pre-service teachers, and reflection on all these experiences all contribute to the development of reflective thinking skills for lesson planning, implementation, and evaluation. This implies that when pre-service Economics teachers reflect on their teaching, they become more skilled and professional in their teaching career.

Implications on Teacher Education

The study implies that for effective teacher education, pre-service teachers should well be equipped with knowledge and skills of reflective practices to improve their teaching skills. It is therefore recommended that pre-service teachers keep their knowledge of reflective teaching up to date to improve their teaching skills. Reflective teaching lecturers should strive to teach the course well to improve pre-service teachers' knowledge of reflective teaching. Pre-service teachers should maintain a positive attitude and use reflective teaching to improve their teaching skills.

6. Conclusion

The study established the importance of reflective practice and its significant predictive influence on the teaching skills of pre-service Economics teachers. It can therefore, be concluded that fostering professionalism in a teaching career cannot be achieved by simply highlighting the inadequacy of Economics pre-service teachers. Rather, steps have to be taken to bring about the desired changes in teacher education through teaching practice. Hence, it is important to promote reflective practice in Economics pre-service teachers for the development of teaching skills so as to promote quality education which is one of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Recommendations

The knowledge and practice of reflective teaching have resulted in significant gains in teaching skills. From the findings, teacher educators should review the teacher education curriculum and adopt reflective teaching practice for meaningful and outcome-based teaching practice exercises. Economics lecturers should be trained on the effective use of reflective practice and introduce it to the students. Pre-service teachers should keep their knowledge of reflective teaching up to date to improve their teaching skills. Also, Economics pre-service teachers should put reflective teaching into practice to become reflective and professional teachers.

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